

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-02 ADP-00 /005 R

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DRAFTED BY: AF/ E: HRMELONE

APPROVED BY: AF/ E: HRMELONE

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R 272248 Z MAR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056396

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA LONDON NAIROBI
ROME MARCH 22, FROM MOGADISCIO REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0397

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SO ET

SUBJ: SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN TENSIONS

REF: ADDIS 3179

1. SUMMARY. AFE DIRECTOR COOTE AND I HAD LONG AND FRIENDLY
TALK WITH MAJOR ABDI WARSAMA, SRC MEMBER AND CONFIDANT OF SIAD,
AT PRESIDENCY MARCH 21. (MAJOR ABDI SAID HE FILLING IN FOR
FONSEC OMAR ARTEH, WHO OFF FOR CAIRO, AND CONVERSATION WOULD
BE REPORTED TO PRESIDENT.) ALMOST ENTIRE EXCHANGE TAKEN UP
WITH SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN PROBLEMS IN GENERAL AND CURRENT TENSIONS
IN PARTICULAR. END SUMMARY.

2. MAJOR SAID ETHIOPIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS BOTH BAFFLING AND
ALARMING. COOTE, IN REFERRING TO HIS RECENT TALK WITH ETHIOPIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER (REFTTEL), REPLIED ETHIOPIANS INCREASINGLY CON-
CERNED BY SOMALI WAR POTENTIAL AND INTENTIONS. TROOP DISPOSITIONS
CONSTITUTED WHOLLY PRECAUTIONARY AND DEFENSIVE MEASURES.

3. ABDI WARSAMA WAS SKEPTICAL, SAYING OPERATION SMACKED
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DANGEROUSLY OF PREPARATIONS FOR PREEMPTIVE ATTACK BEFORE SOMALIA GAINED NATIONAL UNITY AND STRENGTH. I STATED WE WERE TRYING CALM ETHIOPIANS; DID SOVIETS TRY CALM SOMALIS? ABDI DUCKED, BUT CLAIMED SOVIETS DID NOT WANT HOSTILITIES. MAYBE NOT, I SAID, BUT CONTINUED INSTABILITY IN HORN SUITED THEIR PURPOSES.

4. MAJOR ABDI PLUGGED FOR US HELP IN GETTING ETHIOPIANS FACE UP TO BASIC PROBLEM. SOMALIS WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON THEIR DEMANDS. COOTE SAID NO DICE -- THIS WAS AFRICAN PROBLEM FOR THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED TO WORK OUT TOGETHER AND HE URGED THEY RESUME DIALOGUE. I OPINED SOMALIA VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM FOR INSISTING ON RESOLUTION BASIC ISSUE FIRST BEFORE BEING WILLING DISCUSS ETHIOPIAN SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS.

5. ABDI (WHO HAD SAT IN ON TALKS) CLAIMED EMPEROR HAD TOLD SIAD IN OCTOBER 1971 HE RECOGNIZED THERE WAS BASIC PROBLEM AND HAD ASSURED SIAD THEY WOULD SOLVE IT TOGETHER. THIS STATEMENT HAD RAISED HIGH HOPES. BUT NO PROGRESS ON ISSUE SINCE. INSTEAD, RELATIONS HAD DETERIORATED, WITH PROVACTIVE MOVES BY ETHIOPIANS.

6. ACCORDING ABDI, SOMALI RELATIONS WITH KENYA WE O. KJM ALTHOUGH FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE REMAINED, AT LEAST KENYANS HAD GONE ALL- OUT IN IMPROVING LOT OF SOMALIS IN NFD. IN CONTRAST, ETHIOPIANS CONTINUED MISTREAT OGADEN SOMALIS, WHO IN TURN DEMANDED ACTION FROM SOMALI GOVERNMENT.

7. COOTE AND I WARNED THAT PRESENT TENSIONS AND RECIPROCAL MISCONCEPTIONS OF OTHERS' INTENTIONS ON BOTH ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI SIDES COULD ACCIDENTALLY LEAD TO SERIOUS CONFRONTATION. ABDI STRONGLY ASSERTED THAT SOMALIA HAD NO AGRESSIVE INTENTIONS. RECENT SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES NOT SIGNIFICANT; GOVERNMENT AND SOMALI PEOPLE COMPLETELY TAKEN UP WITH DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. BY ITS GOOD OFFICES IN UGANDA- TANZANIA DISPUTE, SOMALIA HAD DEMONSTRATED HOW IT FELT AFRICAN PROBLEMS SHOULD BE SOLVED. HE DISMISSED REPORTS WE RAISED THAT GUERRILLAS TRAINED IN NORTH KOREA WERE NOW POSITIONED ALONG FRONTIER AND READY TO INFILTRATE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

8. ABDI INDICATED SIAD WOULD PROBABLY ATTEND MAY OAU SUMMIT AT ADDIS AND HE HOPED HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE COULD THEN BE RESUMED.

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OM SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY COMMERCE " CHIMICO"

RAN MUCH ALONG SAME LINES, WITH SECRETARY STRONGLY URGIN US INTERVENTION IN SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE, GIVEN EXTENT OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA. HE STATED SOMALIA WOULD ACCEPT OUTSIDE MEDIATION. IN RESPONSE OUR QUESTION, HE TENDED DOUBT THAT ANY OTHER AFRICAN STATE COULD PERFORM HELPFUL ROLE.

10. COMMENT: ABDI WARSAMA' S REMARKS CLEARLY REFLECT PRESIDENT SIAD' S THINKING. HIS STATEMENT ON DANGER OF PREEMPTIVE ATTACK BY ETHIOPIA REPRESENTS STRONGEST CONCERN WE HAVE HEARD FROM GSDR TO DATE. LOORAM UNQUOTE ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE056396
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AF/ E: HRMELONE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730340/aaaaijlv.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 ADDIS ABABA 3179
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Sep-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <29-Nov-2001 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980105
Subject: SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN TENSIONS
TAGS: PFOR, ET, SO, n/a
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005